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AN EIGHTH-CENTURY GENIZAH DOCUMENT.

THE document which is here published is taken from the inexhaustible treasury of valuable MSS. brought to Cambridge from Cairo by Dr. Schechter. It is written on vellum, and measures 32 by 29 cm. (Press-mark, T-S., 16. 79).

The document is interesting in the first instance from the palaeographical point of view, for it is distinctly dated. For this reason a facsimile is appended. The spelling **פצטאט** in line 2 is especially noteworthy; as indeed is the combination **פצטאט כער**. In line 20 we have the more usual **פסטאט**; at the early date to which the document belongs the spelling was evidently not yet fixed. On the other hand, the form **פצטאט** also survived, though it is rarely found. An instance of it occurs in an Oxford document dated 1134 (MS. Heb. b. 12, Cat. No. 2,875), another in a Cambridge marriage document of the year 1534 (T-S., 16. 112). In a Cambridge document (T-S., 16. 189) the name is spelt **פיצטאט**. Another unusual spelling (**פסטט**) may be seen in a Kethuba dated 1049 (T-S., 20. 7). But in the vast majority of cases the spelling is, of course, **פסטאט**.

But the intrinsic value of the document is also considerable. Apart from its importance on the history of documentary *forms*, it throws new light on the condition of the Cairo community in the eighth century; introduces us to a head of the community (Abi-'Ali Hasan of Bagdad)

of whom we have so far no other record in Cairo documents ; gives us a clue to the occupations of the Jews (we have a family of apothecaries and a dealer in almonds) ; and adds a little to our knowledge of the topographical situation of the Jews in Cairo at the very moment when the city was being largely rebuilt. It is clear that in the year 750 Jews were already domiciled in the Qaṣr 'sh-Sham', the Palace of the Candle, where a few Jews and Copts still reside to-day. This vast palace or fortress was a town within the town, and unmistakably belongs to the oldest part of Fostat. It was possibly an ancient Roman fortress, and the title may even go back to the Persian fire-worshippers. (See Makrizi, I, 307; Amélineau, "La géographie d'Égypte à l'époque copte," p. 548; Casanova, "Les noms coptes du Caire," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'arch. orient. du Caire*, I, p. 142, cf. the plan *ibid.*, p. 224.) It is interesting to remember that the two synagogues (Babylonian and Palestinian) referred to by Benjamin of Tudela were both situated in the Qaṣr 'sh-Sham', and it is possible that allusion is made to these in the passage discussed below. The term (*Say-dalaní*, line 9) interpreted "of the apothecary's family" is, Prof. E. G. Browne kindly informs me, a *nisba* derived from the trade of selling drugs and medicines, and points to the fact that Joseph the Cohen belonged to a family which had carried on that trade; his father or grandfather would presumably have been a druggist (see As-Suyúṭí's *Lubbu'l-Lubát*, ed. Veth, Leyden, 1842, p. 164).

The MS. is in good condition. The vellum, it is true, is cut away at the foot on the left side, but none of the text has been lost by the cut. The few gaps in the body of the MS. may be easily supplied; but in line 15 the restoration is difficult. It is possible to read ישיבתין, which would give us in the eighth century what we have evidence of later, "two Academies" in Miṣr; but the gap is better supplied by בניסחין. It will be noted that three words, which are written above the line in the original (in lines 2, 9, and 15), have been here printed on the line.

זכרון עדות שהיתה בפנינו אנו העדים החתומים למטה בשטר הזה כי אמר לפנינו נחום בן אב[ר]הם
 בן נחמיה אעלמו אן לי פי אלדאר אלהי ההנא בפצטאט מצר פי קצר אלשמע פי אל זקאק אלמערקו בוקאק אל
 אלמלאצקא לדאר אבי עלי חסן אלבגדאדי ראש הקהל ש' צ' לי הדה אלדאר חסעה קראריט ולזרעה בן עמרוא [חסעה]
 קראריט ואלרבע אלבאקי מן זמלה אלדאר וזו אלסחה קראריט לכבא בנת הלא אללזואני אללאז בן זאבר זונה אבי יצחק בן
 5 בן נחמיה ואלאן אשהדו עלי ואקנו מני מן אל אלאן ואכתבו ואכתמו עלי בגמעי מעאני אלחנז ואעזבו דלך לזרעה הדה בן עמרוא
 ולכבא הדה בנת הלא לזיון דלך בידהמא חנה עליי למא בעד אליום אד הודא אקר בין ידיכס אקראר צחיה תאבת מן אלאן
 ברצאיי ואבתיארי בלא קהר ולא אבראה ולא מרץ ולא כדיעה ולא גלט בל בעקל צחיה וקלב סאלס וראיי תאבת ונייה חקיקה
 אני קר אלזמת נפסי ושרטת עליהא להמא שרט צחיה תאבת לאום כאבר מא יכח מן אלשרוט אני לא אמלך מן אלחמעה
 קראריט אלמזכורה אלהי מן הדה אלדאר אלמוצופה ליוסף אלכחן אלצידלאני בן אברהים אלמערקו בן כיש לא בביע ולא בתבה ולא
 10 באיקאף ולא בוגה מן זמעי וגוה אלחמלך לא פי אלסר ולא פי אלעלאניה לא [א]פעל דלך אנא ולא אוכל מן יפעלה ולא אמרה
 ולא אמלך הדה אלחמעה קרארט ליצא למן אעלם אנה ימלכהא לי[וס]ף הדה וקר [שר]מת עלי נפסי אנא[א] נחום הדה אלשרט
 אלמדכור פי הדה אלכתאב תחביתא צחיהא תנאי בפול כתנאי ב[ני ראו]ב[ו] ובני [גד בת]ין קודם ללאו [כ]מא ילזמי הדה
 אלשרט מהמא זורעה וכבא מאלכין למא המא מאלכין לה פי ה[ד]ה אל[א]ר אלמ[דכ]ר[דכ] וברלך ילזמי [מא אל]מתה לנפסי
 חסב מא תקדם דכרה פי הדה אלכתאב פמתי נקצת אנא נחו[ם שי] ממא [חק]דס שרחה מן [הדה אלש]רט אלמדכור
 15 כאן עליי ופי כאלץ מאלץ עשרין דינארא ואונה זיידה קדש עלי אל[כניס]תין במצר נצפין באל[ס]ויה פהדא אלכתאב
 כאחבם כתאב 'בון ואותקה בביטול כל מודעין מראש ועד סוף וקיבלתי עלי אני נחום אחריות שטר תנאי זה
 כחוק וכחומר כל שטרי מחזקי מעליי דבי דינא דחקינו רבנו ונהנינו בעלמא מן יוסא ולעלם דלא כאסמכתא
 ודלא כטופסא דשטארי וקנינא מן נחום דנן בר אברהם בן נחמיה לזרעה דנן בר עמרם ולכבא דא בת הלל
 20 הלוי בן זאבר בכל מה דכתיב ומפרש לעילא במאנא דכשיר למיקנא ביה שריד וקיים וכתבנו וחתמנו
 ברביעי בשבת הווא חדרס יומין לירח כסליו שנת אלפא ושתינ שנין למיינא דרגילינא ביה בפספאט
 מצרים דעל ינלום נהדא מוחבה אל אלדאר אל תלוי בניי חאמי וקיימין שמואל בר אברהם ז' שר שלום בר יוסף ז'
 יצחק בר הלל ז' יצחק בר כלף ז'

Otherwise I have reproduced the document exactly as in the original, and have not corrected some obvious slips of the scribe. At the end of line 19 the scribe had first written a broad final *mem*, within which he afterwards inserted the words which I have printed at the end of the line. In line 12, fourth word from the end, the scribe seems to have begun to write למעשה in error for ללא (see T. B. *Gittin*, fol. 75 b). In line 5 (ninth and tenth words) the repetition of ל is a case of dittography. The reader will be able to check all the conjectures of the editor, with the aid of the facsimile.

The document is dated (line 20): Wednesday, Kislev 11, in the year 1062 of the "era used in Fostat," i. e. the Seleucidæan era (312-311 B. C.). Hence the date of the document is A. D. 750. In reducing Genizah dates to dates A. D. it is necessary to subtract 312. There are, however, some difficulties in the matter which will be treated more fully in connexion with some other Genizah documents to be published later on.

The substance of the document is as follows. Nahum, son of Abraham, son of Nehemiah, declares before witnesses that he possesses nine *qirats* (i. e. twenty-fourths) of a certain house in Fostat Miṣr. The house is described as in the "palace Alsham", in the lane . . . [the name of the lane is unfortunately obliterated] adjoining the house of Abi-'Ali Ḥasan of Bagdad, the head of the Community." The rest of the house is owned by Zur'ah, son of 'Amran, and Khiba, daughter of Hilal (Hillel) the Levite, an almond-merchant, son of Jabir, wife of Abi-Iṣḥaq, son of . . . son of Nehemiah. Zur'ah owns nine *qirats*, and Khiba the remaining quarter of the house. Nahum enters into an engagement with Zur'ah and Khiba that he will not, by any conceivable means (among which are specified sale, grant or Waqf), dispose of his share in the house in such a manner, directly or indirectly, as may bring the share into the possession of a certain Joseph the Cohen, of the apothecary's family, son of Ibrahim, known as Ben-Kish.

The obligation is to hold so long as Zur'ah and Khiba retain their shares of the property. This engagement is emphasized with every possible term of legal stringency, every imaginable reserve is repudiated, and the promise is reinforced by Nahum's assent, in case of breach, to a fine of twenty full-weighted and good dinars for the benefit of the two [Synagogues?] in Miṣr, the fine to be divided equally between the two.

The witnesses are Samuel son of R. Abraham, Sar Shalom bar Joseph, Isaac bar Hillel, and Isaac bar בלף.

The historical problems which this document raises are of some importance. But I have been urged to publish the document without delay, and I accordingly present this imperfect edition. Doubtless some of my readers will have suggestions to make on the details of the document.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. David Yellin of Jerusalem for help in reading the Arabic; indeed, several of the conjectures introduced are derived from his acute suggestions. To Mr. E. Worman, M.A., of the University Library, Cambridge, I have to express warm thanks for copying the MS. in the first instance. The suggestion made above, that the fine was to be applied to certain Fostat *Synagogues*, is confirmed by an early but undated fragmentary document (T-S. 12. 129), to which Mr. Worman has drawn my attention. A money fine is there described as נדר והקדש ללכניסתין אלדי בפסטאט.

I. ABRAHAMS.